

a great opportunity for us to have interchange. There's all kinds of ways for the United States and Chinese people to get to know each other, and I look forward to encouraging those kind of avenues of dialog. Presidents can talk, but sometimes the best way to have lasting friendship is for there to be a lot of people-to-people exchanges.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:16 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Yao Ming, center, National Basketball Association's Houston Rockets. President Hu and two reporters spoke in Chinese, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a Luncheon Honoring President Hu Jintao of China

April 20, 2006

Mr. President, Madam Liu, Laura and I are honored to welcome you to the—and your delegation to the White House. It's a pleasure to have you here, along with our other distinguished guests.

China is home to an ancient civilization, and it is helping to shape the modern world. In a single generation, China's economy has moved from isolation and stagnation to engagement and expansion. As China has grown, our two peoples have come to know one another better.

Thirty-five years ago this month, the Chinese Government welcomed the United States ping-pong team to Beijing. *[Laughter]* It's an event that marked the beginning of renewal—renewed cultural exchanges between our two nations. Today, Chinese athletes compete professionally in the United States, and Americans appreciate the opportunity to see them play.

In 2008, China will welcome athletes from all over the world as your great nation hosts the summer Olympics. Beijing will showcase China's transformation and demonstrate China's commitment to the international institutions that make fair and peaceful competition possible for all nations.

Mr. President, I thank you for the constructive and candid conversations we had this morning. I appreciate the opportunity to expand the dialog between our two great na-

tions. And, Mr. President, I'm pleased to offer a toast to you and to your gracious wife and to the people of China.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:20 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Liu Yongqing, wife of President Hu. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Hu.

Remarks at the President's Environmental Youth Awards Ceremony

April 20, 2006

The President. Thank you. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. Welcome. Glad you're here. Sorry I'm a little late. I just finished having a lunch with President Hu Jintao of China, a very important lunch. I hope you forgive me for running a little late. But thanks for letting us come by to say hello. I'm proud to join Steve Johnson in honoring young Americans who have given time and energy to help make this country a better place. We're really glad you're here.

You're serving as young stewards of the environment, which means you're setting a good example for what it means to be a citizen. It's, like, what we call citizenship in action. And you're helping make America a wonderful place. And so we're really glad you're here. I'm glad to be a part of the award ceremony.

I want to thank all the Administrators from the EPA who are here, but I particularly want to thank Steve and Debbie for joining us as well. We're here to honor, Steve, in case you don't know it yet—*[laughter]*—49 young Americans who are helping to protect the natural heritage of our country. I appreciate the fact that you're setting good examples too, by the way, and doing what you're doing, you're showing people how to lead and how to be a responsible citizen.

I appreciate the rain gardens that were built in places like Massachusetts and Michigan to catch runoff and prevent it from polluting local rivers and streams. That's a smart idea; thanks for doing it. In New York, folks here have organized volunteers to stencil warnings near neighborhood sewers. That's